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RR RUEHDBU  
DE RUEHNT #0059 0141231  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 141231Z JAN 09  
FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0255  
INFO RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 0013  
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0015  
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 0019  
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT  
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA 0016

UNCLAS TASHKENT 000059

SIPDIS  
DEPT. FOR SCA/CEN  
SCA/PPD AND DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [SCUL](#) [UZ](#)

SUBJECT: UZBEKISTAN: UZBEK SINGER NOT ARRESTED

11. (U) Reports in the press that popular Uzbek singer Yulduz Usmanova was arrested on January 10 appear to be false. Reported yesterday by the independent Voice of Freedom website and then picked up by Kyrgyz News Agency AKIPress, the story claims that she was arrested during a wedding performance in front of hundreds of people.

12. (U) Usmanovas own website denies the alleged arrest. The official statement on her web-site ([www.yulduz.uz](http://www.yulduz.uz)) states that "I was very surprised and indignant to learn about my alleged arrest," and goes on to declare that "this news is absolutely untrue and is ungrounded."

13. (U) Ozodlik (Radio Free Europe/Radio Libertys Uzbek service) also denies rumors of Usmonovas arrest. They cite her producer, who says she is in Russia and plans to return to Uzbekistan in a couple of days. He further speculated in the article that the rumors are being intentionally spread to sabotage an upcoming new album and U.S. concert tour, which will begin on February 15. (Note: Usmanova is outspoken. Reportedly the Uzbek authorities have warned her not to criticize her government in media interviews. This has not stopped her from being quite frank with the BBC and Voice of America. End note.)

14. (SBU) Comment: This posting of an unsubstantiated rumor is yet another example of the weak fact-checking and journalistic skills of media in the region. End Comment.  
BUTCHER

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